IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

NATAN SHCHARANSKY TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP

MAY 14, 1986

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

64-879 O WASHINGTON : 1986

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402

J891-2

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CONTENTS

MARCH 18, 1986

WITNESS

	Page
Anatoly Shcharansky	16

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1—Written statement submitted by Senator Claiborne Pell	41
Appendix 2—Written statement submitted by Senator Patrick Leahy	42

PUBLIC HEARING ON NATAN SHCHARANSKY TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1986

COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, DC.

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, at 10 a.m., Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, Chairman, and Representative Steny H. Hoyer, Cochairman, presiding.

In attendance: Commissioners and Senators John Heinz, Malcolm Wallop, and Dennis DeConcini; Commissioners and Representatives Dante B. Fascell, Edward Markey, Don Ritter, Christopher H. Smith, Jack F. Kemp, and John E. Porter.

Also in attendance: Michael R. Hathaway, staff director and Mary Sue Hafner, general counsel of the Commission.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN D'AMATO

Chairman D'AMATO. Let me say on behalf of my Commission members and my Cochairman, Congressman Hoyer, we are going to attempt to do something that is quite unusual at a congressional hearing—we will limit our remarks, because we have really come to see and to hear the true champion of human rights, Natan Shcharansky. In this situation, our remarks would be superfluous.

On behalf of all of my Commission members along with our Cochairman Hoyer, we are going to make two brief presentations to this great champion of human rights.

If there was ever a man who stood up for human rights, embodied in our Bill of Rights, it is Natan Shcharansky.

Although it is our Nation's Bill of Rights, the fact of the matter is these are the principles for which he has given so much of his life.

Natan, may I present to you, on behalf of all our Commissioners, our Nation's Bill of Rights.

You have fought a battle not only for Soviet Jews but for all mankind, and we deeply, deeply appreciate your efforts. We are going to want to know what you think we can and should be doing to aid others, not only the 400,000 Soviet Jews but all mankind who face these attacks upon their rights.

Thank you for being who you are and what you are.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Cochairman HOYER. Natan Shcharansky, as Cochairman of the Helsinki Commission, I would like to join Senator D'Amato in welcoming you on behalf of all the members of our Commission and on behalf of all the Members of Congress of the United States, your coconspirators, as you described us yesterday.

I would like to present you with this committee print of the documents of the Helsinki Monitoring Groups.

Clearly, in August of 1975, when the Helsinki accords were signed and the 35 signatory nations said: There are certain things we are going to do, there are certain principles by which we will abide, and there are certain things that we are going to accord to our own citizens which we believe represent minimum levels of dignity and human respect to which they are entitled, it was right, it seems to me, for the citizens of those nations to assume, that they would have the right to oversee the implementation of and the adherence to those principles.

You have shown unmatched courage and devotion to the freedom of the human spirit and to the moral obligations that were agreed to in Helsinki. For that, not only do the Jews in the Soviet Union, not only do the oppressed peoples of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, but all peoples of the world owe you a special debt of gratitude. I want to congratulate you on behalf of the entire Commission and the Congress of the United States, and present to you a committee print of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group's documents.

Congratulations, and thank you.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Thank you.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, photographs were taken.]

Chairman D'AMATO. The Commission will come to order.

This morning we have a truly historic event, probably the highlight of this year's Commission activities, in having before us someone who gives vivid testimony about those who suffered under oppression when human rights were denied, someone who understands, someone who has come to symbolize the hopes that all people have and the freedoms that all people yearn for.

Because we are here to listen to and learn from this valiant citizen of the world, because he belongs to all of us now, I would hope that we would forgo our opening remarks so that we could hear Mr. Shcharansky. We could then pose our questions to someone who does understand what the struggle for human rights really means.

So, in the interest of moving the proceedings along, I am going to forgo any opening remarks and ask my colleagues if they would do so as well, so that we can benefit from this marvelous individual's thoughts.

My Cochairman, Congressman Hoyer.

OPENING REMARKS OF COCHAIRMAN HOYER; REPRESENTATIVE FASCELL; SENATOR WALLOP; REPRESENTATIVE KEMP; SENATOR HEINZ; REPRESENTATIVES RITTER, PORTER, SMITH OF NEW JERSEY, MARKEY; AND SENATOR DeCONCINI

Cochairman HOYER. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Mr. Shcharansky, we want to welcome you again to this room in which you have visited before and to welcome you before the Commission, which on numerous occasions over the last 10 years has held hearings on questions related to the Helsinki Final Act and implementation by the nations who have signed that act.

We are particularly pleased that somebody of your commitment, courage, and experience is now going to bring us to first hand not only testimony of your experiences, but we hope as well, your advice and counsel as to what we can do in the future.

Before proceeding—and I am not going to make a statement, consistent with the Chairman's admonition, and he is indeed correct that we want to hear from you—I want to remark, however, that to whatever extent the Helsinki Commission has been responsible for moving this process forward and to supporting your efforts and the efforts of hundreds and thousands of others, is the result of Representative Dante Fascell's leadership. I think it is appropriate to recognize the former Chairman of the Helsinki Commission who for 8 years served as the leader in this Nation on behalf of the observance and commitment to the Helsinki Final Act and its undertakings, the present Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Dante Fascell.

[Applause.]

Representative FASCELL. My colleagues, I want to say that it is a great privilege to join all of you today and to have the opportunity to hear and to see a man who gave us inspiration from the time this organization started.

Chairman D'AMATO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your tremendous leadership in bringing our Helsinki Commission to where it is.

Senator Wallop.

Senator WALLOP. Mr. Chairman, in line with your request, I will ask unanimous consent that my introductory statement be included in the record as if delivered.

Chairman D'AMATO. Without objection, so ordered.

[The statement of Senator Wallop follows:]

Malcolm Wallop

May 14, 1986

STATEMENT FOR THE HEARING RECORD BY SENATOR MALCOLM WALLOP, HELSINKI COMMISSIONER, FOR THE HEARING WITH NATAN SHCHARANSKY TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP, MAY 14, 1986, 10:00 A.M., 2172 RAYBURN

Mr. Chairman, Cochairman Hoyer, members of the Commission, Mr. Shcharansky, Distinguished Witnesses, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Helsinki Commission meets here today to mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Moscow Helsinki Group, pioneered by Yuri Orlov in 1976 after the Soviet Union announced that the USSR had become a signatory to the Final Act of Helsinki in the summer of 1975. The Moscow Helsinki Group, consisting of twenty-one brave and courageous Soviet citizens, was launched to promote the principles and promises of the Helsinki Accords within the Soviet Union. Among the founders of the Moscow Helsinki Group were persons whose names have become familiar to us all, including Anatoly (Natan) Shcharansky, Dr. Elena Bonner, Dr. Andrei Sakharov, Yuri Orlov and many others. The Moscow Helsinki Group hoped that the Soviet Union meant what it promised when it signed the Helsinki Final Act, with all its noble human rights and human contacts provisions.

But alas, Mr. Chairman, the hopes of the Moscow Helsinki Group and many other such groups within the Soviet bloc were quickly dashed. Every member of the Moscow Helsinki Group has suffered incredible hardships for legitimate human rights activities which became Soviet law when that country signed the accords. The members of the Moscow Helsinki Group very shortly after its founding had to endure house searches, threats, job loss, detentions, arrests, trials, concentration camps, gulags, imprisonment and exile. Nineteen members of the original group have suffered for their belief that the Soviet Government might meet its written treaty promises made to the world in the Final Act of Helsinki. Only two have been allowed to leave the Soviet Union, but only after incredible treatment at the hands of the KGB.

Mr. Chairman, one member of that group, Natan Shcharansky, is here with us today, after having endured long years in the Soviet gulag and, in accordance with true Soviet cynicism, released in a spy exchange. I welcome him here today and celebrate with him and his wife, Avital, their triumph over the sons of darkness.

But, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Shcharanskys release is no symbol of any changed Soviet behavior in the human rights field but rather a symbol of everything which that system is not. The Soviets want praise for this release of one person among the many thousands who have suffered. We must keep them ever in mind as we speak here today of the trials of the Moscow Helsinki Group and many other such groups in the Soviet empire.

Mr. Chairman, another celebrated member of the Moscow Helsinki Group was none other than Dr. Andrei Sakharov, brilliant physicist and father of Soviet magnetic nuclear fusion research. Dr.Sakharov was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his human rights activities under the Helsinki Final Act but was not even allowed to accept the prize. His brave wife, Dr. Elena Bonner, had to accept it for him while the Soviet KGB plotted to imprison him. Dr. Sakharov and many other members of the Moscow Helsinki Group suffered incredibly for their human rights activities. At age 65 Dr. Sakharov still languishes in Gorky in KGB hands, old and sick.

It is an absurdity that the Soviet Union's leading nuclear physicist should be in Gorky when the Soviet system most needs him - in the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident. But, Mr. Chairman, that is how that evil system functions. It violates every principle and treaty obligation it ever made on human rights and breaks the written promises it made to the world in the environmental protection sections of the Helsinki Final Act by not informing the world instantly of the Cernobyl tragedy and then keeps its best nuclear brains in prison. This is utter madness! The Soviets violate the right to life even of their own citizens in a case like this. Their behavior defies description and constitutes a crime against humanity.

Mr. Chairman, in our joy for the Shcharanskys here today, we must not and cannot forget Dr. Sakharov and all the others. We must remember especially that his wife, Dr. Elena Bonner, another member of the original Moscow Helsinki Group, must return to exile in Gorky in less than two weeks. Their plight stirs the hearts and minds of free people everywhere and saddens us all.

Sadly, Mr. Chairman, there are those in this country who would make political hay out of the just cause of the Moscow Helsinki Group and the plight of brave men and women like the Sakharovs. There are people in this country who support this cause because they have their own agendas or because it is politically expedient to do so. I find this reprehensible.

And then, Mr. Chairman, there are those in this country who argue endlessly over how best to handle the cases of Soviet Union human rights violations. They debate whether the American President should see any Soviet human rights activist, whether it is Solzhenitsyn or Dr. Elena Bonner, and regardless of which party controls the White House. The Congress debates and for years passes rhetorical resolutions which lead nowhere. The foreign policy establishment - including the NSC and the State Department - argues the best way to succeed in achieving the reunification of divided families, or the release of members of the Moscow Helsinki Group, or the emigration of Soviet Jews. Such bickering and debating, I submit, plays right into the hands of the Soviets who can smile at the success of their strategy of dividing and conquering us on these issues within our own system.

In view of the foregoing, Mr. Chairman, I urge us to work together as much and as closely as possible to promote the cause of human rights under the Helsinki Final Act. I especially urge the President to see Mrs. Bonner before she returns June 2 to exile in Gorky. I and a group of United States Senators are writing to the President about this and I hope we shall be heard!

Mr. Chairman, on May 12, I inserted an article in the Congressional Record on the absurdity of Soviet emigration policy. The article appeared in the May 6 edition of the New York City Tribune. I ask also that this article be made a part of today's hearing record. Thank-you.

SOVIET EMIGRATION POLICY IS ABSURD

• Mr. WALLOP. Mr. President, for the past several weeks the United States has fielded a delegation to an international meeting of the states which signed the Helsinki Final Act. That meeting is taking place in Bern, Switzerland, and its purpose is to discuss the progress in human contacts between the Western democracies and the Soviet bloc states.

The United States delegation has had an uphill struggle at that meeting to obtain any Soviet cooperation in discussing its human rights record. The Soviets insisted on closing the meeting to the media and the public and then complained in the international press that the United States delegation was being aggressive when it pushed for open debate on Soviet compliance with the human contacts provisions of the Final Act of Helsinki, which the U.S.S.R. signed in 1975.

One reason, Mr. President, is that the Soviet Union and its clients absolutely refuse any open discussion of their emigration policies, even when they are obligated by treaty to do so, as they are at this CSCE Conference at Bern. And the Soviet Union ignores our exhortations concerning its emigration policy in every instance, including such cases as those of Dr. Andrei Sakharov, who still suffers in Gorky in KGB hands for his legitimate human rights activities under the Helsinki Final Act.

I ask that the following article from the May 6 edition of the New York City Tribune be reprinted in the RECORD as a reminder of the absurdity of Soviet emigration policy.

The article follows:

LOGIC BEHIND ABSURDITY IN U.S.S.R.'S EMIGRATION POLICY

(By Lev Alburt)

A few days ago, my friend Boris Gulko, a former Soviet chess champion and a "refusenik" for the past seven years, phoned me from Moscow. He told me: "I'm very grateful to all who organized and publicized the recent chess tournament in Bern supporting my right to emigrate." Following is an update on remarks I gave March 19 at a press conference held jointly with Rep. Jack Kemp, Rep. Jim Courter and Edward Lazansky, director of the Sakharov Institute, for the purpose of questioning Soviet emigration policy and in particular to highlight the situation of the Gulko family.)

According to Comrade Michael Gorbachev, Andrei Sakharov must remain in Russia because he knows Soviet military secrets. These secrets somehow haven't become obsolete in 20 years.

Boris Gulko and his wive Anna, both former Soviet chess champions, never have had access to any secrets, including those of the mysterious game of chess. For more than seven years they have been trying desperately to receive permission to leave the Soviet Union—all in vain. The Gulkos have a 7-year old son, David, who was born a refusenik.

The brave struggle of the Gulkos, their protests, their hunger strikes, have produced a lot of sympathy in the West. Why, you may ask, wouldn't Soviet leaders, from Brezhnev to Gorbachev, let them go and do what they want to do, namely, play chess and raise their son as a free human being? After all, the USSR spends millions of dollars annually on chess for propaganda efforts, and cases such as Gulko's to a great extent negate these efforts. To answer this questions to understand the hidden sense behind the seemingly absurd emigration policy of the USST, we should take a brief look at the very basics of the Soviet system.

Believe it or not, Soviet "socialism" is simply a code word for state slavery, based almost entirely on terror or on a threat of terror. In order to survive, not to mention obtaining the simple pleasures of life, Soviet "citizens" must behave as if they were devoted servants of their beloved masters of the Politburo, or, in Soviet newspeak, as if they are "Soviet people" who, by definition, love their Communist Party and its general secretary—and have no other goals but to promote the interests of the Socialist Motherland.

To those who find this behavior strange, and who prefer to believe that these backward Russians have been brainwashed by communist propaganda, I would remind them how some hostages of Arab terrorists became aware of the merits of the Palestinian cause—only to return to a normal state of mind immediately after being released.

In order to worship what they hate and to betray what they love, Soviet people must always remember that they are destined to live and die in their country-prison, and thus must learn to adopt to this reality. Ergo, there must be no emigration, and by the way, no religion as well—in other words, no hopes for escape in this life or even in the life hereafter.

When, in the early 1970s, the Soviet rulers had to allow a small fraction of certain ethnic groups (Jews, Armenians, Germans) to emigrate in order to receive Western credits, technology, grain, unilateral disarmament—in short, detente—they were fully aware of the negative effects that this emigration, this minor leak, would have on their system and did their best to minimize these effects.

Haven't you ever asked yourself why a certain medical doctor or a Ph.D. in physics, has been allowed to leave Russia only three months after applying for an exit visa, when an old man or woman not productive any longer, indeed, almost a burden to the state, has been receiving "refuses" year after year? Illogical, you may say—not at all. If the Soviet government allows certain groups of its subjects to leave Russia as they please, these groups would inevitably become virtually independent, no longer forced to play according to the communist rules of the game—and thus a daring example for all.

To ask Gorbachev, for instance, to grant a free exit to all those over 60 is to ask him to put his already shaky empire in great jeopardy, in fact, to dismantle it.

So, under pressure from the West, the Soviet government allows some individuals to go free—and here I should pay a tribute to those Americans who made this wonder of the second Exodus possible, among them Congressman Jack Kemp and that great champion of Soviet people Sen. Henry Jackson of Jackson-Venik fame. But the rules were intentionally made such as to allow no rules, no predictability at all.

As a result, Dr. Edward Lozansky, a physicist and brilliant organizer, is now in America as a director of the Andrei Sakharov Institute, instead of working in some Moscow lab on a Soviet version of Star Wars—while chess players Boris and Anna are challenging the empire in a struggle for their lives.

Can we help Boris and Anna? Definitely yes, and indeed, by our very presence here we are already helping them, protecting them with a shield of public awareness.

Comrade Gorbachev can not let the Gulkos go without raising hopes to others who wish to emigrate—the 7-year-long ordeal of the Gulko family isn't an encouraging example. Just let's make it absolutely clear that Boris and Anna Gulko, their friend Vladimir Pimonov, and all other refuseniks and prisoners are not forgotten, and hopefully they will be released—as Anatoly Shcharansky was.

By the way, we planned to call our tournament "Salute to Gulko and Shcharansky"—Shcharansky is a chess master and probably he would now be a grandmaster if he had not chosen mathematics as his profession.

I hope Gulko, too, is freed soon. The Soviet government needs us—our grain, in particular—more than ever. We should ask Gorbachev to pay for it by getting out of Afghanistan and, yes, by releasing Sakharov and Gulko.

Helping those brave people in faraway Russia is more than a human rights act, more than caring for those in need. Our solidarity makes oppressed people stronger and more determined, and inevitably makes their rulers weaker, their society more open and thus less dangerous for us.

The people of Russia, the people of all nations enslaved by communism, are our natural allies.

Together we will win. Twentieth century slavery will not endure to the 21st century.

I believe that we'll be generous in our victory. The American government will give immunity and asylum to the Gorbachevs and even Congressman Solarz wouldn't ask nasty questions about how many billions in real estate this couple owns in New York City •

Senator WALLOP. I would just say then, for all of us who remember so very well the presence of your wife, Avital, who was always dignified, always courageous, and she left, as it was, a poignant reminder in our midst of what you were suffering and others like you, and will you pass our greetings on to her?

Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Kemp.

Representative KEMP. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Shalom, shalom, Natan Shcharansky, and mazel tov on the birth of that baby that you are expecting, you and Avital.

I join my colleague, Chairman D'Amato, in suggesting that not only are you a citizen of the State of Israel but also of the world.

I was speaking this morning at a Brazil-United States business council, Mr. Chairman, and I happened to say that I had to leave because I was going over to greet one of the great freedom fighters in the world, and the place stood up and applauded your name in an environment that I would have not thought possible.

So, we all share in the thrill of your release, we all share in your desire to get the Soviet Union to commit itself to living up to the Helsinki accords, that that is a high order of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and you have helped raise the consciousness of the world to the issue of human rights, and I join my colleagues in saluting you and your freedom loving and freedom fighting wife, Avital.

God bless you, Godspeed to you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman D'AMATO. Senator Heinz.

Senator HEINZ. Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous consent that the text of my remarks be in the record, but I just want to make one observation.

About 4 years ago, Avital Shcharansky and Senator Paul Tsongas and I went down to the Soviet Embassy here in Washington, DC. At first they wouldn't let us in the door. We wanted to talk about your freedom and they wouldn't let your wife in.

Finally, Senator Tsongas and I gained entrance and they proceeded to tell us why it was none of our business that any member of the American political system, let alone any United States citizen, should ever question the treatment of other human beings in the Soviet Union.

Obviously, over the last 4 years and going back many years before that, many individuals, many members of this group, many Members of Congress have made similar and even greater pilgrimages than that.

But let me just say, it just shows that as long as we never forget, we will make the kind of progress that you represent, and what we should never forget is there are a lot of other people who are yet to find the kind of freedom that you have been fortunate enough to achieve, and we will not forget them.

[The statement of Senator Heinz follows:]

OPENING REMARKS OF SENATOR JOHN HEINZ
HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING WITH
NATAN SHCHARANSKY

MAY 14, 1986

Mr. Chairman, I commend you for scheduling this hearing. We have never had the opportunity to hear from a more respected or knowledgeable witness. Our honored guest and his colleagues of the Moscow Helsinki Group have figured in so much of our discussion, it is gratifying to finally have him join us to talk about the issues that concern us all.

It is a very great honor to have Natan Shcharansky at our proceedings here today. All of us should look around us and be thankful for the resources the Helsinki Commission has to draw on. We have a fine staff, we have the goodwill of the American people, the support of the government, the glare of favorable publicity for our activities in support of human rights.

And then we should consider Natan Scharansky. His courage, and that of the other 20 members of the Moscow Helsinki Group, is the only thing that sustained them in their valiant effort to see that the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act were observed by their government. Instead of government funding, and positive media coverage, and respect and gratitude from their citizenry, Natan Shcharansky and his colleagues on the Moscow Helsinki Group have been persecuted, imprisoned, exiled, reviled in the press, and driven to the limits of human endurance.

Natan Shcharansky and his courageous friends lacked all the trappings of authority, but their moral authority was unquestionable, and for this reason the Soviet state had to disband them.

Persecution and crimes against human rights and dignity can produce bitterness, but in Natan Shcharansky these things have brought forth an invaluable wisdom. When Natan first arrived in his new home, the State of Israel, his first words concerned not himself but the same principles for which he had sacrified everything. He spoke of the Jews who were suffering in the Soviet Union because of their desire to emigrate. He spoke of his concern for those caught in the conflicts that still rend the Middle East. In short, he was the truest witness to the reverence for basic human rights that has made him a hero to all freedom-loving people.

Natan Shcharansky has not forgotten those left behind in the Soviet Union. He has not forgotten those who suffer from persecution, wherever they might be. The enemies of freedom who tried to break his spirit instead forged an even deeper commitment to human freedom.

We celebrate Natan Shcharansky's release in February as a great victory, but I think the great freedom fighter who appears before us today considers that his struggle has just begun.

Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Ritter.

Representative RITTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Since Congressman Kemp has welcomed you in Yiddish, I will welcome you in Russian.

(Russian phrase.) I would like to welcome you to our Helsinki Commission.

Let's get on with the work of seeing how many other Soviet Jews and oppressed peoples in the Soviet Union we can liberate, and you, our dear friend, will be our leader.

Thank God you are here.

Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Porter.

Representative PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shcharansky, I am sure that if you didn't know before, you know now that you have become the world's symbol of commitment to human rights, not only Soviet Jewry, not only human rights in the Soviet Union itself, but human rights throughout the world.

During the course of the morning I will, and other members, I think, will be asking your guidance not only as to how we can have the Soviet Union live up to the Helsinki accords, not only how we can increase Soviet emigration, but how we can advance the cause of human rights throughout the world.

Finally, let me say that I am sure you are, as you should be, more than proud of the commitment and dedication and courage that your wife, Avital, brought before not only the Congress but bodies throughout the world to seek your release and to advance the cause of human rights.

Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Smith.

Representative SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask that my opening remarks be included in the record. Mr. Shcharansky, it is good to see you again, having had the privilege of being with you yesterday.

I know that I speak for all members of this Commission and the Congress in welcoming you to the United States. We do see you as an international symbol of human rights, and as Mr. Kemp said, "a world citizen." I would also add you are an international treasure.

Several years ago, in a trip sponsored by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I had the privilege of meeting with your mother, who had recently visited you. She came back with tears in her eyes and said, help my son, help him get out of prison and out of the Soviet Union. I thank the Lord that you are here and look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Representative Smith follows:]

U.S. COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
HEARING WITH ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY
OPENING REMARKS BY REP. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH (R-NJ)
May 14, 1986

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

It is a great privilege for me to be at this hearing today. For many years we have hoped and prayed for the release of Anatoly Shcharansky from Soviet prison, for permission for him to emigrate to join his beloved wife, Avital, in Israel.

Mr. Shcharansky, welcome to this hearing, and welcome to the United States. Your presence here today is certainly an answer to prayer.

In 1982, I traveled to the Soviet Union to learn firsthand of the treatment of Jews there. It was a difficult and emotional trip. The nine days I spent in the Soviet Union have left a deep and everlasting impression on me.

In small, simple apartments and flats like that of Dr. Aleksandr Lerner, a refusenik since 1972, we heard people explain the hardships and alienation suffered by those whose only crime is a desire to leave, or a desire to practice their faith.

It was a very special honor for me to meet with your mother, Ida Milgrom, Mr. Shcharansky. With tears in her eyes, she asked us to increase the public outcry on your behalf. What a tremendous joy it must be to her to know that you are free at last, living in your homeland of Israel.

Until freedom exists, our efforts on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of others like you who seek to leave the Soviet Union will not subside. Emigration and other human rights concerns are issues central to all negotiations between the Soviets and the West. Public pressure, diplomacy, linkage of human rights to bilateral trade and peace issues are all tools at our disposal.

You, and your compatriots who still suffer under the repressive policies of the Soviet Government, can rest assured that this Commission, this Congress, indeed, this nation will never abandon the cause of freedom of thought, conscience and emigration in the Soviet Union.

Once again, we are truly delighted and honored to have you with us today. I greatly look forward to your insights into the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union, and particularly how we in the West can most properly pressure the Soviet Government to relax its repression of Jews and their faith.

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Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Markey.

Representative MARKEY. Thank you.

Mr. Shcharansky, you have made us all very happy that you have changed the headlines of the newspapers of the world from "Free Shcharansky" to "Shcharansky is Free." Your victory is more than a personal victory. It is a victory for all citizens of the world who cherish freedom. You have become a symbol for all those who are fighting in all countries of the world for their own personal freedom, and I congratulate you for your perseverance.

Thank you.

Chairman D'AMATO. Senator DeConcini.

Senator DECONCINI. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that my opening statement be put in the record. I would like to join my colleagues in welcoming you, Mr. Shcharansky, and I look forward to your testimony and perhaps some time to ask you some questions.

Thank you.

[The statement of Senator DeConcini follows:]

NEWS

From U.S. Senator Arizona

DENNIS DeCONCINI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday May 14, 1986

WASHINGTON--Following is a statement given by Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz) today at the Helsinki Commission hearings.

I want to thank Chairman D'Amato and Co-chairman Hoyer for scheduling this hearing to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Moscow Helsinki Group. As my colleagues have said before me, it is an honor to have Natan Shcharansky in our presence today. Mr. Shcharansky, your determination and perseverance in the face of tremendous adversity are a great inspiration to all. In your short lifetime you have endured numerous hardships difficult for free people to comprehend.

Permit me to quote from Tennyson's poem, "Ulysses", which immortalizes the hardships of mortal man as he fought against the fates and overcame insurmountable odds. Mr. Shcharansky, I believe the following words capture the spirit of your character and achievements.

Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Chairman D'AMATO. Natan, let me say that this is now your opportunity to speak to us and to the world. Maybe you don't recognize the significance of what just happened, but to have 4 Senators and 7 Congressmen—that is 11 Members altogether—make their opening remarks in less than 10 minutes is one of the greatest testimonies that we could ever make to the importance of your views.

Natan Shcharansky.

STATEMENT OF NATAN SHCHARANSKY

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I understand that it is a historical moment if seven Congressmen and four Senators managed in 10 minutes to greet me.

I hope also to take a little time only for saying some words, and then to answer all your questions.

Now, I am reminded, just sitting here, I remember exactly 10 years and 2 days ago, in 1976, a group of 11 human rights activists in the Soviet Union declared the establishing of the group for monitoring the fulfillment of the Helsinki agreements in the Soviet Union.

Just some days after this, we heard by Voice of America that in the United States there is formed a Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, with the Chairman, Mr. Fascell.

My comrade in arms, one of our members, Mikhail Alexavik, whom I am very happy to see now here, said to me, "My God! Who will now believe us that it wasn't a plot."

Really, the KGB never believed that it wasn't a plot, that it wasn't coordinated action, that we in the Soviet Union, while organizing our group, had no inkling of what was happening at this moment in the Congress, and what kind of Commission was there.

Then, when I was looking through the pages of my criminal case, I could see exactly this line, that there was a special report of the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Soviet Union and the KGB, headquarters of KGB, how your Commission was created, and that it was just you who organized, giving direct recommendations for organizing our Commission.

Well, I leave it to your own judgment whether it is true or not.

But the thing is, that when our group was created, we had no illusions who we were dealing with. Yuri Orlov, the chairman of our group, the person who managed to organize such a movement in which, for the first time in the Soviet Union, were included Zionists like me and representatives of all the other national movements, representatives of different religious groups, and simply human rights activists who were concerned about violation of human rights of individuals. And for the first time we could together gather information and make the documents, and present them to the world public opinion, sending them to all the 35 nations which signed these agreements.

Yuri Orlov said that he is sure that very soon they will start arresting us, the Soviet authorities, under the article 64, which means high treason.

I was doubtful, I said, "No," I think as article 70, which means anti-Soviet activity.

Very soon I predicted his way and he predicted my way. So, I was arrested under article 64 and he under article 70.

But the idea is that we did know what is the threat.

Nevertheless, we thought it is very important now, when for the first time maybe in the history, there appears an official document which connects problems of human rights with the problems of foreign relations, and when the Soviet Union for the first time agreed with such linkage.

Many people were encouraged by this fact. We decided that it was very important to support this process and that the people it encouraged should be really struggling for their rights.

The enthusiasm of many people all over the Soviet Union, when they found out about the founding of this group, we were receiving thousands of letters. Many people from different cities were coming to us. We were publishing many documents about the situation in Soviet camps, about emigration, about the situation with religion in the Soviet Union.

The results are known to you.

Yuri Orlov, the head of the group, after a very hard 7 years of imprisonment, is now in exile. He is more than 60 years old. His health is very poor. He is, by the way, an outstanding scientist, and of course he has no opportunity to continue his scientific activity. All those years in the labor camp, he was made to work on very hard physical work, except those times when he was in the punishment cell, of course.

Dozens of other Helsinki Group members, who joined this movement later, are still in prison.

I was meeting in the camps with—I spent a lot of time with the leader of Helsinki Group in Lithuania, Viktoras Petkus. I met Ukrainian Helsinki Group members, Armenian Helsinki Group members.

I was in the same camp with members of the Moscow Helsinki Group, Ivan Kovalev, Anatoly Canagne, and Viktor Nekipelov. I know how hard is their situation and I will be ready to answer your questions about it.

But what I want to underline now is that the idea of Helsinki was that the relations between the states are intrinsically dependent on the atmosphere of trust which cannot exist without some basic human values on which all our civilization stands.

This linkage, though formally accepted by the Soviet Union, was never realized and was never accepted.

In fact, all the future Helsinki process was destroyed by the actions of the Soviet authorities, who not only arrested the Helsinki Group members but, as you know, practically closed the doors for emigration.

If there was emigration of Jews at the moment of signing this agreement of some thousands, now it is practically zero.

There were new strong repressions against religious and national minorities. There appeared new laws which prohibit any contacts with the foreign press.

Conditions in the camps became worse.

I often hear the question, and I found out that there is even discussion in America, if it was worth it to continue keeping the sig-

nature of the United States of America under this act, wouldn't it be better simply to declare that this is finished?

My opinion is that the mistake wasn't in signing this act. The mistake is not to demand from the Soviet Union to fulfill all the obligations.

Soviet policy now, as I understand it, is to separate again all these baskets of the Helsinki Agreement and to try to reach progress in those baskets in which they are interested, but ignoring fully the human rights programs.

I think the only correct and right policy is to insist on the existence of this linkage and that no progress in any of the directions of Helsinki accords can be reached without the progress in the third basket.

I don't want to speak more. I prefer to answer exactly your questions. I would be happy to.

Chairman D'AMATO. Anatoly, Natan, in your last remarks I think you go right to the essence of questions that many of my members would probably like to pose, and that is, you said no progress can be made unless there is progress in the third basket, the basket which guarantees human rights.

I agree with you. I think the members of the Commission agree with you. But it seems to me, and I wonder what you think, that one of the problems we face is that there are those who are fearful that if we insist that the Soviets keep the agreements that they have signed concerning human rights, that we would jeopardize any chance for the peace process, as it relates to nuclear disarmament.

There is the big fear that if we insist on these rights, that this will jeopardize the chance for other accords.

Would you care to comment on that?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Everybody wants peace. I don't think there was an aggressor in the history of mankind who didn't want peace, but on his own conditions, of course.

The question is how to reach this balanced peace.

It is interesting that even in the period of détente in 1973, 1974, 1975, when the Helsinki Agreement was signed, I could read in official theoretical Soviet magazines on philosophy, on history, and so on, statements that détente is the most secure way of transforming the world from its present situation to world communism.

According to this thinking a third world war must be avoided, but at the same time, since the victory of communism from the point of view of the Soviet dogma is inevitable, a way from coexistence between capitalism and communism the world communism must be secured.

That was really the understanding in the Soviet Union of détente.

For this they needed agreements which can limit the activity of the West, because in democratic society government is, of course, dependent fully on the people, and their foreign policy and home policy are very closely connected.

The situation in the Soviet Union is absolutely contrary and that is why, if any agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States of America limit possible actions of the United States, they don't put any real limits for the Soviet Government.

As you know, such things as Angola, Afghanistan, Poland, and so on, were taking place during the so-called détente process.

Nevertheless, of course, all of us need peace. I repeat, as I said already several times, that with all my love and devotion to the cause of human rights and Soviet Jewry, I can't say that, oh, let us have the third world war or let the Soviet Jews go.

Nevertheless, we understand that if you want real peace and not simply concessions to the aggressor so that they can continue to pursue their cause in a more secure way, we must be able to monitor each other.

The Soviet Union resists strongly in every point any kind of monitoring or verification of agreements, whether it is the problem of nuclear tests, whether it is the problem of movements of their forces and the information in advance of those movements, or whether it is the problem of human rights.

Why is the problem of human rights monitoring so principal? Because it is the problem of open or closed society.

The more independent the people inside the country, the more dependent are the governments on their people.

That is why the Soviet Union makes everything possible in order that the people inside the country will be deprived of any human rights and the society will remain absolutely closed for their purpose.

That is why I don't think that we can have any serious agreements without finding some ground, some base for mutual understanding, for mutual monitoring. And the only way for such understanding and for such monitoring are just human rights principles.

It was really, from my point of view, a historic moment when 35 nations finally, after long discussions, managed to formulate minimums, only minimums of those principles which are necessary for mutual understanding.

The best test, of course, of the intentions of the Soviet Union to fulfill the agreements was whether they were going through with this.

As you know, the Soviet Union wasn't going to fulfill this accord. That is why I don't think that any agreements with the Soviet Union can be reliable, if this base of mutual trust created by Helsinki accords is not established.

Of course, from my point of view, the best verification of the Soviet Union intentions is such an irreversible step as opening the gates for emigration, of course without any conditions, and the release of all prisoners of conscience, of Helsinki Group members.

That is what I think.

Chairman D'AMATO. Thank you, Natan.

Cochairman Hoyer.

Cochairman HOYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We all have, I am sure, hundreds of questions we would like to ask.

If you could expand a little bit upon the formation of the monitoring group, which you briefly referred to, and the distinction between that group and other similar groups in the Soviet Union at the time of its formation, and why the monitoring group engendered such specific reaction from Soviet authorities?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, it is enough to look at the documents of our group. They were dealing with the problems of Jewish emigration. They were dealing with the problems of conditions in the Soviet camps, of political prisoners in the Soviet camps. They were dealing with the problems of Tartars, with the problem of Pentecostals, with the problem of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, with the problem of Ukrainian national groups.

The fact that people would cooperate on such problems, that they were united by understanding that justice is universal, was unique for the history of this country.

Of course, I want once again to say that the main contribution was made by our chairman, Yuri Orlov, who managed to coordinate this work.

As an official spokesman and the one who dealt with the press, I can tell that from the very first day of the creation of this group, the interest in its work was very big, and that is why the documents which we were producing and sending—attention to those documents was unprecedented.

As a result, the real intentions of the Soviet Union in connection with the Helsinki accords were unmasked practically from the very first months of our activity.

It was a period when there was a lot of public relations, lip service made by all Soviet leaders about their readiness to fulfill the Helsinki accords.

Our group demonstrated very quickly that in fact it is all hypocrisy, it is only lip service.

Cochairman HOYER. Natan, let me followup on that. You have been quoted as saying "that shortly after the execution of the Helsinki accords that human rights violations became worse in the Soviet Union."

Would you comment on that further and tell us exactly how that manifested itself and why you think it happened?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. You mean in the period when I was in the prison or in the period—which one do you mean?

Cochairman HOYER. As I understand it, you are quoted as saying "that a short time after August 1975, when the Helsinki accords were signed, human rights observances became worse in the Soviet Union, rather than better." I would like you to comment upon that, expand upon it, and give me your opinion as to why that occurred apparently shortly after the execution of the document.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. You see, unfortunately, it is almost a tradition of Soviet policy that each time when they have to do something on the international stage demonstrating liberalization or good intentions and so on, they are afraid that such a step can encourage people inside the country, and they immediately, almost immediately start repressions against those who are encouraged.

And, so, it has happened after the Helsinki Agreement, when there was enthusiasm among many people that now it would be much easier to struggle for your rights, whether political, religious, national, and so on, they started a new campaign of arrests.

First, they started with the arrest of religious activists, national activists. Then, when our group was created, the arrest of Helsinki Group members.

As you know, emigration was diminishing all the time, except in 1979 for which there were special reasons. And one of the most indicative things is, of course, the situation in the political prison camps.

And as one who spent 9 years there I can say that practically every year, especially during the last 3 or 4 years, there were appearing new instructions and new laws and new processes because really the policy of the authorities was becoming more and more tough, and the tortures even stronger.

I think the only way to cope with it is to insist that there can be no progress in the Helsinki accords, in the continuation of the Helsinki process, without the third basket.

I can tell you, frankly, that one of the points of the bitter disappointment among the political prisoners of the Soviet Union was when we found out that the Madrid session ended not only without any improvements, but at the moment when the situation for us in the camps was becoming even worse.

Cochairman HOYER. That observation is very interesting as we move toward Vienna in the latter part of this year. As you know, we are having another review conference at the end of this year.

My last question to you: What is your thought and perhaps the opinion in the Soviet Union, to the extent that you know it, with respect to any improvements that may be on the horizon as a result of having a new General Secretary, Mr. Gorbachev?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Sorry. Do I think that there will be changes after Gorbachev's appearance?

Cochairman HOYER. Yes.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Just yesterday, while being in the committee of Mr. Fascell, I was asked something like that, and I said that—you see I have a tie with me, but unfortunately today I don't have the tie—I said, for the first time in 20 years I put it on, because I was told that to be in the rotunda and to meet with the President is impossible without a tie, but it didn't change me, though it made some difference in the image but it didn't change me.

And I think that today I am the same as I was yesterday.

I want to say, the same is with Mr. Gorbachev. He, of course, tries to play with the West in accordance with the rules of the West, to make a little bit of difference, but he belongs to his system fully and this new image which he tries to create doesn't change him and doesn't change the system.

I think that he is the one who probably understands the problems, the troubles of the economical system, and the threat to the Soviet Union because of this increased gap in technology between the East and West, better than his predecessor. At least he speaks about it much more openly.

So, he understands better how desperately they need Western technology and open trade with the West, and it gives hope.

On the other hand, I don't think that he can go beyond the limits which the system permits, and that is why I am not very optimistic about the possibilities of fulfilling human rights demands in the Soviet Union.

Cochairman HOYER. New tie but the same policy is what you are saying.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Yes; that is exactly what is taking place now. To a great extent, it depends on you, I mean the Congress of the United States, the administration, and the other partners of this Helsinki Conference, and on whether there will be unity and accord among all the nations who took part in this Conference on the question of demanding from the Soviet Union to fulfill the third basket.

Cochairman HOYER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman D'AMATO. Senator Wallop.

Senator WALLOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am startled by one thing and I hope those in the audience and those who may be watching on television can be made aware that this committee and its equivalent in the Soviet Union is represented by those pictures over there [indicating], people in prison, people who for their beliefs and for doing what we do here openly in front of television cameras, in front of the world, are, for their enthusiasm for what the Soviet Union willingly undertook—they were not forced into those agreements—now sit in prison or in exile or in pain.

And I think your response to Congressman Hoyer's question is indicative of the fact that you are a symbol, not of what the Soviet Union was, but what the Soviet Union remains.

Your release did not end their cynical abuse of their own citizens. We have pictures of those. Your testimony of last week that the figures may be as many as 10, 11, or 12 million indicate something that I think most Americans don't care to hear. I thank God that you are here to tell us what we do not care to hear.

In that light, what kinds of visibility do you think we can give to someone like Elena Bonner before she returns to the Soviet Union and to her imprisonment with her husband, Dr. Sakharov? Should we request again that the President see her? Is there something that we can do to bring visibility to that departure, that the poignancy of it and the symbolism of it rests with the free world?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. As to Ms. Elena Bonner, who was a founding member of our group and with whom I have had the pleasure to meet only 2 days ago, I know that in the committee of Mr. Fascell in a few days there will be a ceremony in connection with the 65th anniversary or date of birth of Andrei Sakharov, and I think it is very good that the Congress of the United States of America makes such a ceremony.

It is very important that on all levels, on all political levels of the United States of America there will be demonstrated solidarity with the cause which is represented by Andrei Sakharov.

I think it is important not only from the point of view of the values which this man represents, but simply from the point of view of his and other Helsinki Group members, other activists' survival in the Soviet Union, the more open will be their support, the more open and the more strong will we campaign for their release, the better are the chances for these people to survive.

Senator WALLOP. In line with that, a better symbol would be to have Ms. Bonner address a joint session of the Congress and perhaps Gorbachev, should he be here.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to end by saying I am in total awe of the courage of this man and his wife. I thank you for being here.

Chairman D'AMATO. Chairman Fascell. Let me, before I turn to Chairman Fascell say, I agree with Senator Wallop. I would like to associate myself with his remarks. It is about time we demonstrated just a little bit of the courage that Natan Shcharansky and all of those supporters of the Helsinki process in the Soviet Union display and demonstrate now.

Chairman Fascell.

Representative FASCELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shcharansky, let me welcome you to this meeting of the Helsinki Commission and to say that what you are doing here is vitally important, not just because we have the opportunity to hear you and to question you, but because this is an official record of the U.S. Congress, and that official record will be disseminated to the world as an official proceeding and the whole world will have the opportunity, all of those who are interested for one reason or another, to read what you have to say and to read what we have inquired about.

So, let's set the record straight some more and say that it was your group and those who were cofounders with you in the Helsinki Monitoring Group who really shook the world, especially the skeptics who thought that the Helsinki accords was a mistake for the United States and for the West, and that the Soviets had scored a tremendous propaganda victory in that they had finally gotten a document to stabilize the boundaries in Europe. Then all of a sudden they woke up and found that there was Orlov and Shcharansky and Bonner and a whole bunch of other people who took the signature of the Soviet Union very seriously with respect to the rights of their own people, and they started the process which inspired the world, it inspired the emulation of other groups everywhere, in the United States and other countries, and suddenly brought home to the West the idea that maybe Helsinki accords was a good idea, especially Basket 3, and that the world should never forget what had transpired in the past, that Basket 3 was looking to the future and there was a reason for that.

So, the record is quite clear that we followed your lead, you didn't follow ours, and we were happy and pleased to do it.

I want to ask you several questions in rapid order, if I may.

One, should the United States repudiate the Helsinki accords?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. What does it means, repudiate? I don't understand that.

Representative FASCELL. To cancel, disavow, withdraw.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, in fact, I answered that already. I think the important thing is to insist on its fulfillment and to make no progress, no progress in any branch before there will be progress in the third basket.

Representative FASCELL. In other words, our policy should be that we would not do anything with respect to Basket 2, Basket 1, or other matters unless we have equivalent progress in Basket 3?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Exactly. The balance which was reached in the beginning must be saved and not destroyed.

Representative FASCELL. Now, let me ask you another question. There has always been a dispute and considerable discussion about

what should actually transpire at the followup meetings, both at Belgrade, Madrid, and I am sure the same thing will happen in Vienna.

For example, should there be a document, should there not be a document?

You have raised the question yourself that there was disappointment after Madrid because there was no visible progress on the part of the Soviet Union with respect to actual actions in Basket 3. That is, some change in emigration, the freedom of prisoners of conscience, or otherwise.

Now, what should we expect as a minimum, not the maximum, but as a minimum out of the review conference in Vienna this year?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, I think that the papers or the papers signed must reflect the real situation but not simply to mask, to create a false image of progress when in fact there is no progress.

That is why the agreements must be signed only if there is really some progress or some obligations.

That is why the minimum, I think, which has to be demanded, are the points which are fixed in the Helsinki accords, the process of reunification of families must take place, of course.

The people who are struggling for their rights in accordance with the Helsinki accords shouldn't be punished, and no doubt that all Helsinki Group members must be released, all prisoners of conscience must be released. The people who were punished for their religion or for their cultural activities, like Hebrew teachers, like religious minorities, must be released.

I think that you, the countries who signed the Helsinki agreements, have a full right to demand that.

Representative FASCELL. One final question, Mr. Chairman.

You believe, as I understand it, that we should have private diplomacy and public diplomacy in dealing with the question of human rights in the Soviet Union. Am I correct?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. That I believe what?

Representative FASCELL. That we should employ private diplomatic efforts in trying to improve the human rights situation in the Soviet Union, as well as public efforts.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, my position is that quiet diplomacy can help only if it is the final point of strong public pressure, strong public diplomacy. Exactly as it was in my case, the final exchange, my final release was reached in quiet diplomacy by exchanging of spies. But as you all understand, it would never take place if there wasn't such a strong campaign in which the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States and many other people in different levels took part.

Representative FASCELL. I wanted to be sure and get that on the record before I asked my last question, which is: Why does the Soviet Union, which has no respect for the law and the law is strictly an instrumentality of the state, not for the individual, why do they pay attention at all to international opinion?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. The important thing for the Soviet Union—for example, I will give an example, not from the point of view of relations between the states, but how the KGB breaks people, tries to destroy people, keeping them in the camps. They isolate you

from all the world and then they try to make you accustomed to their system of values. Then you start thinking—I remember very well how I was myself resisting to thinking, so when the KGB investigators were telling me that I was sentenced to death inevitably, that I put them in such a position that they will have to sentence me to death.

Inevitably, I thought, my God! they are almost the same people as I am, they speak in the same way, they think in the same way, why should they desire, why should they have such a wish as to kill me, maybe to try to find a common language with them, because of the fear.

Well, I resisted this feeling and I didn't permit myself to feel so. But I saw many people who finally were caught in this trap.

Something like that happens on the international level. When the Soviet Union tests all the other countries, like the United States of America, the system of which is absolutely different and the principles on which this system is based are totally different, as you correctly said, that their laws are simply instruments for manipulating people, there is no individual. Individual is something against the law, because the individual is only part of the system. And here, it is to the contrary.

Here the law is something which defends the individual, first of all, from the possible arbitrariness of the authorities.

While there are so different systems, it is very important for the Soviet Union that the world will see their system in the same terms. That is why it is important that they see that they have the same parliament, they also have a system of elections, where they have elections at all, which elect nobody. But it is important for them that the world will know that there are elections.

It is important that there are laws, and then when you—of course, everybody is afraid of the war, for example. They are afraid, we are afraid of war.

When we are under this fear of war and we start thinking, my God! they are the same people as we are, why shouldn't we make some agreement with them, and so in such a way they try to make you play in their game, on their rules.

That is why they were so indignant when the President of the United States called them "an empire of evil," because of what has happened, the President said—but it was for them unacceptable. That is why they are so sensitive to public opinion. It is very important for them that the idea that they are the same type of system, not the same, but approximately the same, that the platform on which societies are based, the values are common. It is very important for them.

It is very important for them that the world wouldn't realize how basic is the difference, and that is why, if you will realize, then you have to demand from them to create some common platform for understanding, and they don't want it.

Chairman D'AMATO. Senator Heinz.

Senator HEINZ. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Natan, one question that I have puzzled over is, Why, after all these years, the Soviets finally let you go?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, nobody knows exactly how it happened, but there is no doubt that only because they saw that it is a ques-

tion which they can't put out of the agenda, that it is not the question of time, but that the campaign was so strong and the involvement of public figures or political figures, of all those people in the relations with whom the Soviet Union is really interested, was so deep that they understood that there was no way out, there was no way to reach what they want to reach with the West without solving this problem, on the one hand.

On the other hand, of course it was an attempt at cosmetic improvement, because my release can be the beginning of the process, my release can be the end of the process.

To a great extent, it depends on you what will be in the future, whether it will be the beginning or the end.

Senator HEINZ. If the Soviets thought it was going to be a cosmetic improvement, they must have decided to ignore your character because you have always, as we say in this country, "told it like it is." You have been telling it like it is ever since your release, and you are telling all of us the way it has been and remains in the Soviet Union today.

Surely, they must have realized—but maybe they didn't—that you would be a very effective spokesman against the continuing repression that exists in the Soviet Union.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. You see, they never give up hope to oppress people and even now I am afraid they are keeping my mother and my brother and not giving them permission, hoping to use this as a pressure on me.

Senator HEINZ. Do you think that the summit meeting last year between Gorbachev and President Reagan had any effect in achieving your release?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Yes; I think that for my personal release, it played some role. But whether there will be future progress depends—I repeat, it depends on how the West will treat this problem.

Senator HEINZ. But the bottom line is that the more visibility, the more pressure, the more we hold the Soviet Union to account, the more information that we can receive and give validity to about the repression, the better, the more progress we can expect to make, you believe?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Exactly.

Senator HEINZ. Thank you.

Chairman D'AMATO. We have a vote on in the Senate and therefore, I am going to ask Senator DeConcini to speak next. Congressman Kemp has agreed to wait.

Senator DECONCINI. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I am going to be brief because we do have a vote, Mr. Shcharansky, in the Senate and I have to leave, along with my colleagues, to fulfill our duties.

I have two questions. The first, is essentially a statement.

In the limited experience I have had, visiting the Soviet Union on three different occasions, having talked to Brezhnev, Andropov, and Gorbachev with Senate delegations, we raised your name specifically and those of several other prominent people who were, we felt, being persecuted.

And their answer was always, that that is an internal affairs problem, and that we don't want to talk about it.

Such responses begin to influence you, that maybe our pleas don't do any good.

I am not looking for compliments. What I am looking for is how do you think the Soviet mind works when we continuously raise cases like yours and they put up a front, and say that they are criminals, they have been convicted and we are not even going to talk about them. However, when we want to talk about someone who can't get an emigration visa, which we think is also an internal matter, the Soviets will talk about that. But anybody who has been convicted, they are not even going to talk about. And yet you are living proof that they do think about these cases.

Can you comment?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. You see, as I said yesterday and Mr. Fascell said now, for the Soviet Union law is only an instrument of how to operate with the system. That is why it is not so important for them how they use this law, whether this person is sentenced or not.

Everybody, for example, who decided to leave that country, who dared to say openly something of disaccord with the Soviet Union, with the official point of view, is already a criminal. And it is all simply a question of time or conditions or some pragmatic consideration whether to arrest this person or not, whether to give him permission to leave or not.

That is why when they say these are criminals, they didn't change their point of view about me when they decided to release me. And they didn't think that it became less, the whole affair.

Or when they speak about those people who want to emigrate, from their point of view they are also criminals.

Senator DECONCINI. Let me ask you one last question. The Soviet Jewry organizations in this country, in my opinion are extremely helpful to those of us who are involved in this issue and they also raise awareness for those who are not.

During trips to the Soviet Union, I and many other members have taken time to visit with Soviet citizens, most of them Jewish but not always—some are Baptists and some are Pentecostals—who have had visa refusals, have lost their jobs, et cetera.

These visits have always bothered me. I have asked this question before, and I want to ask it to you. Do these personal contacts within the Soviet Union jeopardize the safety and security of those that we contact or those that we put on a list and give to Soviet officials, asking them to release them and expedite their visas?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. I will say the moment you will stop trying to contact them, or stop displaying interest in your contact with the authorities, they will be doomed to much worse.

Senator DECONCINI. I know that the situation for refuseniks has gotten worse because I was recently in the Soviet Union and listened to their stories of lost jobs, loss of their apartments.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. The situation would be much worse if you stopped displaying interest in them. The only—not the only, but the necessary condition of the survival of dissidents in the Soviet Union is the interest which you display.

Senator DECONCINI. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

And, Congressman Kemp, thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman D'AMATO. Our next member, Congressman Kemp, is not only a member of this Commission, but in addition Congressman Kemp is cochairman of the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jewry. He has displayed great leadership here on the Commission and in his position as cochairman of the Coalition.

Congressman Kemp.

Representative KEMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, welcome, Mr. Shcharansky. It is a thrill to see you here, and I say that with heartfelt sincerity.

There are over 270 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 80 Senators who are members of the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jewry which supports the cause that you represent here today. I don't think that there is an issue that has united the American people and their elected representatives in a more bipartisan way. This committee is a perfect example, with bleeding heart liberals on your left, like Mr. Markey, and bleeding heart conservatives on your right, like Jack Kemp and Al D'Amato.

The cause of human rights in the Soviet Union, and more specifically the issue of Soviet Jewry really is one issue that transcends those otherwise normal differences which sometimes split up the American people.

I see some friends out there who are intimately involved in this cause, Mark Levin of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and Lynn Singer of the Union of Councils among others. I would like to draw attention particularly to that woman whose picture is up there [indicating] Elena Bonner, and her husband, Dr. Andrei Sakharov.

My question expands upon that asked by Senator DeConcini and Senator Wallop and Senator D'Amato, who are keenly interested in the cause of human rights, and as we who believe and hope that the President will see Ms. Bonner, Senator Wallop and I are circulating a letter asking the President to meet with Elena Bonner. Would that help or hurt? Does it advance the cause of Andrei Sakharov or hurt the cause of Sakharov to have his wife visible in the United States and meeting, as you did yesterday, with our President?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. My position always was and I said it today already in connection with this case, that the more strongly support is displayed on every level, including the highest political level of the United States of America, to the cause and to the people who are suffering in the Soviet Union, the better for these people. That is my answer.

Representative KEMP. Then you would agree that this is an issue that requires as much visibility as possible?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Yes; exactly.

Representative KEMP. There are a number of people out here who Senator DeConcini mentioned who have had an impact upon those of us in the Congress, ably represented by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Union of Councils of Soviet Jewry. I have had the high honor of receiving an award from a young woman in the audience, Lynn Singer, of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry.

In case you don't know this, Natan, Long Island is in New York, and the award was named after you. It is one of the great achieve-

ments of my life to have on my wall the award named after Shcharansky.

Lynn and her colleagues and their counterparts at the National Conference on Soviet Jewry have really produced a yeoman effort in alerting Members of Congress to this cause. I know that Al D'Amato, who has also been honored with the Shcharansky Award, would agree.

But I think of Ida Nudel, Vladimir Slepak, Vladimir Feltsman, Yosyf Begun, and countless other individuals who still remain in the prison that is the Soviet Union, and what we can do to ensure their freedom.

I would like to address an issue which has been raised by our Chairman and Dante Fascell, former Chairman. Does the Jackson-Vanik amendment advance the cause or detract from the cause? Let me say, for the record, I was a cosponsor of Jackson-Vanik and do not believe that it should be repealed.

In your mind, having talked about trade and technological gap between the Soviet Union and the United States of America, is it in the interest of human rights for us to repeal Jackson-Vanik or not?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. I think an essential part of my yesterday's speech in the rotunda was to address this issue, and I said there that from my point of view the Jackson amendment must be maintained and reinforced, and of course not repealed.

In fact, the very text of this legislation presents an opportunity to give the Soviet Union the status of most favored nation, but of course only when the President of the United States will be able to prove, to give clear proof of a serious change in the situation.

It was written in 1973. From that time the situation has become much worse. So, I think that only solving the problem of emigration, of emigration of 400,000 Soviet Jews, can put on the agenda the question of the Jackson amendment, not before.

Representative KEMP. I am glad to hear that. This will be my last question, Mr. Chairman, and I certainly appreciate your tremendous leadership and hospitality here in affording all your colleagues a chance to have some words with Mr. Shcharansky.

Natan, you talked about linkage, not only linkage, as I understand it, between the baskets of Helsinki, but linkage between other aspects of those negotiations going on between the West and the East, between the United States and the Soviet Union.

I might say parenthetically, it might help our negotiators for you to brief them—in fact, I would like to suggest that maybe you ought to be in on the negotiations.

I wonder what the Soviet authorities would think if they saw Natan Shcharansky sitting with the U.S. delegation in the negotiations on behalf of human rights, on such things as test ban treaty and arms control?

But other than going over and briefing the U.S. State Department, which I hope you will do, as to how to negotiate——

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Of course.

Representative KEMP. I wonder if you could tell us how you view current discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union at summit talks, at the arms talks in Geneva, at the MBFR talks—that is the mutual balanced force reduction talks between

Warsaw Pact and NATO. How do you view those talks and the inclusion of this issue of human rights?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, between the three baskets of the Helsinki accords there is direct linkage. Between such talks as the SALT agreement and human rights, of course, there is no direct linkage. But as I was already speaking about the necessity to create an atmosphere of trust, I can in more details—well, I don't want to go into details of the military characteristics because I am not a specialist. But as far as I understand, in the competition between these two systems, the West and the East, America has one serious advantage, which is explained by the type of its regime, in which the individual is encouraged to display his initiative. And because of this, the scientific progress is much bigger in the United States of America.

The level of technology and scientific progress is a serious advantage for this system.

At the same time, for the Soviet Union in the military competition, the military has its own advantage. Well, so-called advantage, let's say.

That society is absolutely closed and absolutely secret, not only from the outer world but even inside, as you could see in connection with Chernobyl.

Nobody knows what the real effect, not only on the top level but on the lower level of the Soviet Union.

In these conditions, when you reach agreement—every agreement on SALT, on arms, on limiting the technological advance in the military, I don't think it is very good. We must stop at some point, of course.

But while Americans lose part of their advantages, they must demand from the Soviet Union to lose part of their advantage, to make their society more verifiable, more open to monitoring.

Otherwise, there is no other opportunity to check what really happens, whether they are really fulfilling their treaties. It is not accidental that the Soviets are so sensitive to the problem of monitoring, when you speak about nuclear arms or chemical arms or military maneuvers, or, of course, human rights.

As I said, human rights while being of value by themselves, of basic value of our civilization, have a very practical meaning because the fulfillment of these agreements makes Soviet society much more open. Ignoring these demands of human rights, demands of monitoring, and simply reaching agreements on limitation of scientific and technological progress, makes these agreements always one-sided.

The case of the Soviets doing such things as they did in the so-called détente, when they made major developments of their military forces, when they sent Cuban troops to Africa and they themselves went to Afghanistan, I am sure that all these problems, in fact, are very closely connected.

Representative KEMP. It has been a rare privilege to hear you, and I want my colleague from Massachusetts to know that I was only emphasizing in a humorous way that there really is a bipartisan support for this cause. I only regret, Mr. Chairman, that there is one person absent today who has an empty chair in his honor at

all of these meetings, and his name is Henry "Scoop" Jackson, who should be here today to greet you.

Godspeed to you, and shalom, shalom.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Thank you. Yesterday I spoke to Helen Jackson, the widow of Henry Jackson, and I expressed thanks for all her husband did for human rights and Soviet Jewry. Of course, it is a pity that I don't have an opportunity to do it personally.

But I am also sorry that here are absent all those Helsinki Group members who are in this picture, and not only those who we see in this picture, who are left in the Soviet Union in a very tragic state.

Representative KEMP. We will work to make sure they are here speaking to us just as you are speaking to us today.

Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Ritter.

Representative RITTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to associate myself with the eloquent remarks of my colleague from New York, Mr. Kemp, and the remarks of the Chairman and the Cochairman, and the Senator from Wyoming.

I would hope, that in sum, we could dedicate this session with you of the Helsinki Commission to seeking the freedom of the other members of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group, and I would like to just, for openers, go through their names and their current plight.

Imprisoned is Ivan Kovalyev, sentenced on April 2, 1982, to 5 years of strict regiment camp plus 5 years internal exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

Imprisoned is Anatoly Marchenko, sentenced on September 4, 1981, to 10 years of special regiment camp—I think most people in this audience know what special regiment camp is—plus 5 years of internal exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

Imprisoned, Viktor Nekipelov, sentenced on June 13, 1980, to 7 years in labor camp and 5 years of internal exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda; sentenced again in October 1982 to prison for 3 years.

In exile, Yuri Orlov, and in poor health, as you stated, sentenced on May 18, 1978, to 7 years in strict regiment camp and 5 years of internal exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

Imprisoned, Tatiana Osipova, sentenced on April 2, 1981, to 5 years in special regiment camp and 5 years of internal exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

In exile, Feliks Serebrov, sentenced on July 21, 1981, to 4 years of strict regiment camp plus 5 years exile for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, also a member of the psychiatric working group.

Natan, what you bring to this meeting, this Congress and this country is the truth. You have shown how powerful the truth can be. You are a truth bomb. You are a truth bomb in the midst of an America that often doesn't know, and too often doesn't care.

Your strength is your credibility. You are eminently believable because of the experiences you have endured and because of your ability as a human being to express those experiences in global terms.

We would like to make some progress and you have often talked about the public attention to the plight of refuseniks, of dissidents, of Helsinki monitors.

Some of us would like to encourage the peace movement in the United States to become more active as a human rights movement.

The peace movement is very strong, it is very public, it gets great exposure. It is respected by the Soviet authorities.

How can we encourage the peace movement to take on the cause of human rights? Because in your own testimony here today, you have pointed out how important human rights are to peace. Human rights and greater openness within the Soviet Union are important to peace. Whether in terms of verification of nuclear arms, verification of test ban treaties, or verification of work on strategic defense, all of these things demand some attention to human rights and openness. How can we encourage this major movement within American society to encompass the human rights question?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, in fact, answering some of the questions, I tried to demonstrate the intrinsic connection of human rights programs with peace and with the question of peace and war.

But I think I don't need to convince the American people, whose President, John Kennedy, said in 1963, some months, I think, before his death, that "What is peace if not human rights."

I am not so sure that I quote exactly, but the idea was just this.

And I also understand that these questions are really closely connected. It is enough to give examples. In the Soviet Union they understand it very well. And among the political prisoners with whom I shared my cells and places in the labor camp, they were just activists of the peace movement in the Soviet Union.

For example, dissidents from Riga and some other people who were sentenced exactly for signing an appeal to the Soviet Union and to the foreign countries to declare the Baltic Republics a zone free from nuclear weapons.

As we know, these movements are very powerful in the West and in Western Europe. I don't know, maybe even in America. And nobody persecutes them.

There are people who agree with their politics and others don't agree.

In the Soviet Union, it is a crime. It is a violation of the law. Why? Because the Soviet authorities and the KGB understand the deep intrinsic connection between the problems of peace and human rights, and as they are enemies of human rights, they are enemies of peace.

Representative RITTER. Natan, could you describe for us the difference between the official Soviet peace movement and the unofficial peace movement?

I am not sure Americans who are involved in peace movements are fully aware of the official peace movement that is in many American cities, addressing town meetings, meeting in our churches, and touring the countryside on behalf of Soviet Government peace initiatives.

Could you describe your thoughts on that?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, the difference is approximately the same as between our Helsinki Group, which was created and the members of which were practically all arrested, and the official Soviet so-called public Helsinki Group, which simply repeats what

they are told by the authorities. They are part of the authorities themselves.

The official Soviet peace movement, as well as the official Soviet trade unions, as well as any other organization officially existing in the Soviet Union, are parts of the Government. They are officers simply who do what they are ordered to do, who will never dare to say something that they are not permitted, who can't even think anything. They won't permit themselves to think otherwise than they are told to think.

That is why it is simply, again, an attempt of the Soviet Union to create the image that they have the same type of society as the rest, that they have their parliament, they have their trade unions, they have their peace movements, and so on.

But as soon as there appear people who really are struggling for peace, not listening to what they are told by authorities, or who are struggling for human rights, not listening to what they are told by the authorities about being concerned about this problem, they become the enemies of the state.

I can tell that not only were the representatives of the peace movement in the prison, I was also with the Communists, the so-called Eurocommunists.

The Soviet Union has to accept the fact that there are Eurocommunists in Italy and France. They pretend to be very friendly with them and support one another, but in the Soviet Union Eurocommunists are arrested. I was in the prison with Arkady, so-called, and with some other people who were arrested exactly for the same ideology which is represented by, for example, the Italian or French Communists.

What is the difference between official Communists and that one? The difference is that they don't simply repeat what they are told, what they are ordered to say, but they express their own thoughts. That is the main crime in the Soviet Union.

Representative RITTER. Mr. Chairman, I just want to welcome in the audience as a close, Mr. Michaelson, whose wife is still in the Soviet Union. They have been separated over 30 years.

I would like to welcome—and I see they have just left—the Goldstein brothers. They are members of a Georgian Helsinki Monitoring Group and they have just gotten out of the Soviet Union.

And, also I would like to welcome Ludmilla Alekeyva, a former member of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman D'AMATO. Thank you, Mr. Congressman.

Congressman Porter.

Representative PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Natan, in 1982 I went with another Member of Congress and staff and wives to the Soviet Union. We visited in Dr. Lerner's apartment in Moscow and the Taratuta's apartment in Leningrad with about 45 refusenik families, went with Lynn Singer of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry, and I think that is typical of the Members of Congress. All of us, in a way, are privates in the human rights army, your human rights army.

We visited with your mother and brother, by the way, on that occasion. I came back to Washington and formed the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, which is the second largest voluntary asso-

ciation of Members of Congress, one committed to human rights not only in the Soviet Union but throughout the world.

We deal with individual cases and try to take the edges off of the excesses of the state, not only in the Soviet Union, but in Cuba or the Philippines or Chile, or wherever we can identify a human rights abuse.

But we find, really, a great deal of frustration, as you find, and others in our society find, in making great movements toward establishing human rights worldwide.

And the American people, it seems to me, look on the Soviet Government, and you have alluded to them mostly as the KGB, as a secretive one, a closed society, not absolutely closed, paranoid, and somewhat untruthful. A government that respects only force, that uses violence as a measure of its policy, doesn't respect the rule of law, is anti-Semitic, antireligious, antiindividual, and antirights, and yet we don't think of the Soviet people in that way.

We have hope that the Soviet people are not like their Government, are not represented by their Government, and that somehow all of this can change.

And you said earlier that the leadership of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, is really a captive of the system.

We have hopes, as Americans, when there is new leadership in the Soviet Union that somehow things will change and change radically and change quickly.

I wonder if you can tell us what your feelings are about the future of the Soviet Union. How brightly does it burn in the hearts of the Soviet people to have a society committed to human rights, how representative is the Government of the nature of the people, and what are the long-term prospects for liberalization of the Soviet Union from within?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. That is a hard question, a difficult question.

You see, the people in the Soviet society are very different. Of course, it is a multinational society. And there are nations who were made to join the Soviet Union by force and where, if you take the Baltic Republics, Estonia, Latvia, if you take some of the Muslim Republics in Asia, there are strong national feelings which make people—even if not open dissidents, many of them are internal dissidents, those who, you know, don't accept the system.

Among the Russian people, there are a lot of religious dissidents who don't accept the system simply because their religion is under the law in the Soviet Union.

And, of course, there are such great figures, historical figures as Andrei Sakharov, who give to the world an example of dignity, of human dignity, who continue the best traditions of the Russian intelligensia or Russian literature.

But at the same time, with all this, I think that there is a big mass of loyal citizens in the Soviet Union whose mentality is exactly such as is needed for the authorities. Namely, these people view themselves as part of the system.

They view self-respect not as you people in the free world, self-respect being displaying your individuality, but through belonging to the system, and the stronger the system, the more self-respect.

In the view of a lot of these many people, the law is something by which authorities must operate the system, and that is why, for

them, it is not understandable that the authorities can violate the law.

I remember when the Soviets made an anti-Semitic film and I and some other Jewish refuseniks appealed to the court, accusing this film of being anti-Semitic.

Many people, not only judges but many Russian loyal citizens simply couldn't understand what it means, that the authorities can violate the law. To them law is something that belongs to the authorities, not to other people.

And I can give you many other examples of such type of psychology. This psychology is deeply rooted and that is why to think that all the people of the Soviet Union are striving for the type of democratic society which we have here in America or we have in our State of Israel or people have in Western Europe would be a mistake.

And that is why to think that, as you said, Gorbachev is in captivity and the problem is to release him from this system, to make him more free, No. He is a part of the system, or his mentality, and you can't change him, as well as you can't change the system.

But, on the other hand, I think that this system does—I hope that it does have prospects, first of all because people are becoming more free and we see this in the Soviet Union constantly.

And by the way, when the gates for emigration opened, the status of individualism became higher and the respect of individualism became high in the Soviet Union. And, of course, it influences those people. That is why the emigration is so dangerous for the leaders.

On the one hand, so goes, let's say, the educational process. On the other hand, the economical problems of the system, because of its absolute ineffectiveness in economy, become stronger, and that is why this type of society doesn't have a future.

Chairman D'AMATO. We are going to have to end before 12 m., because Natan has heavy, heavy demands on his schedule.

I am going to ask, Congressman, that we continue now with Congressman Smith.

Natan, let me say that Congressman Smith has been one of the most diligent Commission members, a tremendous battler for human rights and Soviet Jewry in particular, and we are pleased to have him here with us.

Congressman Smith.

Representative SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for those kind remarks.

Mr. Shcharansky, again welcome, and I know that all of us are learning a great deal today and certainly appreciate your comments and your insights.

I think you can see from comments by members of the Commission, there is no disagreement as to the primacy of human rights on this Commission, and in the Congress. Human rights, after all, are God given, they are a recognition of the inherent dignity and value and worth of human life, and accrue to all regardless of age, condition of dependency, nationality, race, color, and creed. Because they are God given, we should enjoy these rights.

I think it is very clear, too, from my work on this Commission and the work I am doing on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and

from reading books like Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "Gulag" that at the core of the Soviet system is a militant atheism. So often we look at the symptoms—we look at what is happening in the Soviet Union—and we fail to recognize what is at the center. What is propelling them to have this hatred of Jews, this hatred of people who believe in God?

I ask that you touch on this mindset of the Soviet Communist atheistic state. How do you think it may begin to break down over the years?

Obviously, moral persuasion only has a limited effect on the Soviets, so we must employ other means, like trade sanctions and such. You might touch on some new strategies we might begin, perhaps today, in order to see some changes in the Government.

Could you touch on the causes, the root causes of this militant atheism? I remember being in Leningrad with Mark Levin, who is in the audience, and others.

We went through Kazan Cathedral, where there was a museum on atheism, and saw all of the world's symbols of religion, whether it be Christianity, Islam, Judaism, all turned upside down.

As we were looking at these various desecrations of religious symbols, schoolchildren were walking by. They were being told that this is what religion is all about, that it is unscientific, that it is only for the foolish to believe.

And again, this militant atheism, this hatred of God, as I see it, and as Solzhenitsyn has written, leads to a total disregard of human life.

Could you comment on that?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Religion, any religion is the enemy for the Soviet authorities. Why? Because the principles of the society are such that it is supposed that for ordinary Soviet citizens, the Politburo is like the assembly of gods, exactly something like it was in ancient Rome, and these gods are never reelected. From some point of view, they are supposed to be eternal.

They never make mistakes, they know not only what is in the interest of the state, they know what is in the interest of every citizen, and every citizen must simply accept as truth everything that they say to do, to read, and to think.

This is the ideal situation. But thanks to God, it never happens. And that is why the people, even after long years of oppression, repressions, whenever there appears an opportunity to display any kind of individual independence in thinking, in beliefs, in activity, they display it, even if the price is very high.

That is why religion was from the very first days of the Soviet system, one of their main targets.

Up to now, there exist very strong laws against all kinds of religious propaganda. And, of course, the Constitution officially guarantees religious freedoms and antireligious propaganda—no, it doesn't permit religious propaganda, it permits antireligious propaganda.

As to religious propaganda, there are two articles in the Soviet criminal law which prohibit it. There is also an article which prohibits to teach the children.

Some pastors, Catholic pastors are in prison—I met them—only because they were preparing children—the parents asked them to

prepare their children for—I don't know the special ceremony in the Catholic Church when you are a 13-year-old, where you must read some piece of New Testament.

As you maybe know, a lot of people were arrested for organizing so-called illegal churches. What is an illegal church? A lot of Protestant churches are illegal, like Pentecostals and others.

And I also was in the camps with such people.

In my estimation, about 5,000 or 6,000 people are constantly in the Soviet camps only for religious activity, while, in general there are approximately, in my estimation, 15,000 prisoners of conscience in the Soviet Union, and approximately 13 million of all types of prisoners, including exiles, including so-called chemist—well, it is another question.

But religion was always a major threat to these authorities because belief in spiritual ideals makes people independent from their process and it is not permitted in this society.

Rrepresentative SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I know we are getting late, so I will just go to one final question.

Chairman D'AMATO. If I might ask the Congressman, because we do have Congressman Markey and we are getting rather close to noon, if you would withhold any further questions at this time, so Mr. Markey can proceed.

Representative SMITH. Yes.

Chairman D'AMATO. One of our great Commission members who is dedicated to human rights is Congressman Markey, who just recently undertook to resolve a case, a cause.

He went to the Soviet Union and helped bring out a young boy by the name of Mikhail Stukalin, the son of a resident of New York, a 17-year-old Soviet boy without family in the Soviet Union. His father had died, leaving him a virtual orphan. I want to commend the Congressman for his magnificent effort. It was a pleasure for me to be able to work with him.

Congressman Markey.

Representative MARKEY. I thank you, Mr. Chairman. We did work together on that case and it was a success. But unfortunately, those successes are so few that we need to dramatize them so that we can continue to make a fight.

Could you give us your view of Mikhail Gorbachev's willingness to change the way in which that country has dealt with human rights and freedom of their people internally, in return for concessions, gains that they might be looking for in arms control or technological agreements with the West?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. You used the word, willingness. I think there is no willingness on the part of Gorbachev to make any improvements.

Representative MARKEY. You are not optimistic at all?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. No; but I said that Gorbachev can make serious concessions, but it wouldn't be the result of his good will. It is going to be only the result of a hard choice, and it depends on you, the United States of America, the other Western countries, whether he will face this choice or not.

Representative MARKEY. What does he want in return?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, I think he wants access to Western technology. He wants profitable trade with the West. And he wants

to limit the opportunities of the West to use their advantages in scientific and technological progress—exactly like in the period of so-called détente, not a real détente, I think, but so-called détente, when they felt themselves much more free in doing what they wanted to do in the world.

And that is why, if Gorbachev will see that without liberalizing their system, without opening the doors for 400,000 Soviet Jews, without fulfillment of their obligations in accordance with the Helsinki accords, they would not be able to get what they want from the West, what they want to get in the political, economical, and military ways, only then will he be willing to do it.

Representative MARKEY. Does the way in which he handled the Chernobyl coverup give us some insight as to the almost glacial pace with which it will take them to move?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. I didn't understand glacial.

Representative MARKEY. A very slow pace, that they handled what could have been a potentially beneficial opportunity to advance the cause of arms control and the need to control radiation and nuclear materials, and turned it into a situation where most of their neighbors are now quite angry with them.

Does that give us an insight as to how slow they might be, even under a Gorbachev-led government, to make the kind of movement that you are talking about?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. I think it is very indicative. I first of all want to say that there is something sensational in the Chernobyl event, but only the size and the fact that it has become known to the West.

The very facts which this Chernobyl event displays are not new for me and I think for everybody who knows the Soviet Union well enough.

What it demonstrates is the very low level of their technology. It is obvious. It demonstrates that they don't pay enough attention to the problems of security of their citizens. It is not a secret.

It shows that it is a very closed society, not only closed from the outer world but also inside, and the people of the society, the majority of people are simply afraid to know what is happening inside the country if they are not permitted to know about it.

All this was demonstrated by the Chernobyl event.

Hadn't the people from Sweden detected the increased level of radiation, I think we would have never known about what happened.

The fact that it has become known, of course, was very unpleasant to Mr. Gorbachev, and the very fact that he decided to cooperate in some way with the West is indicative. But you must not think that this accident by itself can change the type of thinking or the type of approach of the Soviet authorities.

It depends not on what is happening inside, the catastrophies or failures in the economy and so on. It depends mainly on what will be the extent of the West.

Representative MARKEY. What does the typical non-Jewish Soviet citizen know about the plight of Soviet Jews?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Once more, what does the typical?

Representative MARKEY. What does the typical non-Jewish Soviet citizen know of the plight of Jewish citizens within the Soviet Union?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. The typical non-Jewish Soviet citizen, not dissident, what he knows about the plight of Soviet Jewry? Well, he thinks, I think, that these cunning Jews have managed to do so well that they can even go to the West. Why can't we go?

Representative MARKEY. What do they think of the 2½ million remaining Jews in the Soviet Union in terms of the relationship between the state and the Jewish citizens?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Well, it is a difficult question, because people are different. I met a lot of anti-Semites in the Soviet Union who think that these Jews have got enough and we must—why should we give them the privilege of going there and living here and so on.

But I also met a lot of people who treat Jews with deep respect and who are against this system of state discrimination, state anti-Semitism, which is very strong in the Soviet Union.

Among those who raised their voices on behalf of Soviet Jewry were such people as Sakharov, as Orlov, as Viktor Nekipelov, who I see here, and many other people.

Representative MARKEY. How much does the typical Soviet citizen know about the Gulag?

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Oh, very little. First of all, the numbers are not—the size of this program isn't understood fully. Consider that even I, being a dissident already, being a Jewish activist, couldn't realize the size of this program before I went to the Gulag myself.

But as to the ordinary Soviet citizens, they know practically nothing about this.

Representative MARKEY. Thank you.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and your Cochairman, for holding this, I think, very, very important hearing.

Chairman D'AMATO. Natan Shcharansky, you are an inspiration to all of us. Your courage shows the great spirit that individual human beings have and must and should maintain. Your actions, your strength, and your dedication are an inspiration to the whole world.

Certainly your appearance today has been a highlight of this Commission's work and endeavors over the years, at least for the past 6 years that I have been previleged to be a member.

I believe that you play such an important role in all of your appearances, and in your appearance here today, inspiring all of the Commission's members to continue the work that they have undertaken with new zeal, with new fervor. You asked a question, you posed it to us in a number of different ways, about how can we expect a nation that is at war with its own people to be civilized in its relationships with other nations.

This question should give our political leaders around the world, I think, some food for thought. We must work to achieve those human rights that all people seek, not only in the Soviet but in other countries as well.

Thank you for being here today. I know my Cochairman, Congressman Hoyer, would like to address you before we adjourn this hearing. But again, you have the thanks of this Commission.

Congressman Hoyer.

Cochairman HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Shcharansky, all of us very much appreciate your being here and we want to express collectively to you our request that you take our best wishes to Avital, as well, who could not be here with you.

Avital probably has met with everybody on this Commission if not everybody in the Congress of the United States.

Ari Weiss has made sure of that, and Avital has made sure of that. I don't know where Ari is right now, but you are in very good company.

There are individuals down through history, who appear at a particular moment in time when they have the opportunity and the ability to focus the attention of their nation and of the world on problems that need addressing, to dramatize the plight of people who need help, and to energize others to action.

You are one of those people. The Commission is honored to have you here, and all of us are going to be energized by you and your words. We will work with you and with all of those individuals in the room who stand shoulder to shoulder with you to ensure that all of those on whose behalf you speak are not forgotten, and whatever efforts we can make, we will make.

Those efforts will pale when compared with those that you have made already.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SHCHARANSKY. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Chairman D'AMATO. This Commission hearing stands in recess.

[Whereupon, at 12:03 p.m., the Commission was adjourned.]

APPENDIX 1

CSCE Hearing With Anatoly Shcharansky
Statement by Senator Claiborne Pell
May 14, 1986

Mr. Chairman, as a founding member and original Co-chairman of this Commission, I have witnessed the hard realities of implementing the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. However, Anatoly Shcharansky, has lived them. His courage and conviction have been an inspiration to all of us who have been working to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Soviet Union. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome him.

As an activist in the Soviet Jewish emigration movement and a founder of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group, Anatoly Shcharansky fought for basic human rights for his countrymen and worked to promote his government's compliance with the Helsinki Final Act. Because of those activities, he became the target of a systematic campaign of harassment and intimidation which culminated in his arrest in 1977 and imprisonment in 1978.

While in prison, Mr.Shcharansky was subjected to extremely harsh conditions such as insufficient food, inadequate health care, and solitary confinement. His prayer book, a gift from his wife, was taken; his mail was confiscated and visits from his family were banned. At three different times he went on a hunger strike in protest of these activities. Even then, he suffered inhumane treatment at the hands of the Soviet authorities.

Anatoly Shcharansky has experienced the Soviet government's wanton disregard for the human rights of its people. I am sure that his account of those painful experiences will touch our hearts and spur us to new heights in our campaign to force the Soviet Union to fulfill its commitments on human rights.

APPENDIX 2

Patrick Leahy

SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

HEARING WITH ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP

MAY 14, 1986

Mr. Chairman, words cannot adequately express the good fortune we all feel to have Anatoly Shcharansky here with us as we mark the tenth anniversary of the Moscow Helsinki Group.

I had the pleasure of first meeting Mr. Shcharansky in Moscow in 1976, when I delivered letters and photographs to him from his wife Natalia. Senator Hubert Humphrey and I also intervened with Soviet authorities on his behalf. His presence here is a testament to his unwavering faith and determination, and the faith and determination of his wife and so many other people throughout the world who worked for so long to gain his release.

Anatoly Shcharansky spent nine years in a Soviet prison just because he had the courage to speak out on behalf of Soviet Jews who sought to emigrate. Once imprisoned, he never lost hope.

His spirit never faltered. His example has been a source of tremendous encouragement and inspiration to those of us who have been so outraged by the Soviet Union's drastic cuts in the number of visas for Jews in recent years.

That a government can justify imprisoning an entire population is something that Americans will never understand nor accept. 400,000 Soviet Jews have applied for exit visas. Only 1,140 were allowed to leave last year. Having Anatoly Shcharansky among us will be a constant reminder that our efforts are worthwhile, and that we cannot rest as long as those 400,000 remain behind.